

Here's what wowed 'em in Paris

By Barry Conn Hughes

THE WORLD'S FIRST really major exhibition of choice works of Canadian Indian and Eskimo art closed recently after a six-month stay at the noted Museum of Man in Paris.

And beginning Nov. 21, the 186 objects — some of which are shown on these pages — will be on view for seven weeks at the National Gallery in Ottawa.

If you could ever say an art exhibition had a "socko" reception, the Paris show had one. Sixty-five thousand Parisians flocked to see it. French critics, who are considered to



BUCKSKIN SUIT was owned by Duck Chief, head of the Blackfoot tribe of southern Alberta during the early years of the 20th century. The outfit's decoration consists of blue, red and white beadwork sewn in strips to the arms and body. In addition, the suit has the traditional "tadpole" design favored by the Blackfoot tribe.



MOON MASK of painted wood, made by Haida Indians, was found in the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia in 1879. Beauty rather than geography was the criterion for the selection of the exhibits, and West Coast Indian art dominated.



CHILKAT DANCE TUNIC (left) is the work of the Tlingit Indians of northern B.C. and Alaska, and is about 100 years old. The shaped, sleeveless tunic's motifs denote membership in the Grizzly Bear clan.

BONE AMULET (above) was part of the equipment of a Tsimshian Indian medicine man. Amulets represented creatures from which he derived his curing powers; in this case it was a bird.

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good luck to them. I won't lose any sleep. It'll be my turn next time."

Speaking of clients, Sid was on the phone. "Yes, Sid," said Angus, "Bert was just here. He said some bad things about you. . . . Well, Sid, it's your word against his, and if he's got those post-dated cheques you're gonna need something too. Like a lawyer. . . . No, Sid, I'm not mad at you. It's just that forging your mama's signature wasn't very smart. I'm not mad at you. I'm just the guy in the middle." Angus put down the phone. "Geez, that Sid sure is convincing. He could be a great con man - if he isn't one already. Damn if I know who's lying."

Angus' usual procedure is to let it cook awhile and go on to something else. First, a drive with his partner, Fred Vass, to a west end tavern where one of his female clients hangs out. She wasn't in, but the owner - new to the tavern business - said he'd call Angus if she turned up.

"A real helpful guy," said Angus, getting back into the car. "Of course, he'll change. He'll get wise. Then he'll tell us to go peddle our papers." Vass explained that they wouldn't ordinarily go out of their way to pick up this girl. She was small-time and the squad hadn't the manpower to chase after everyone passing a bum cheque. But they'd had a tip she was out this way and, well, they were going this way anyway.

What? Let a known criminal walk the streets?

"Look," said Angus, "we just haven't the resources. For example, I know an old lady who's been passing bad cheques. I know her name. I know what she's done. I know she's in Toronto. Hell, she phones me every now and then to ask us to release her car - you see, we couldn't find her but we found her car and we won't give it up to anyone but her. And when she comes we got her. But she's not coming and, when she calls, she's not about to tell me where she's living. It's a Mexican stand-off. What am I gonna do? Tear up the town looking for a two-bit cheque-passer? It's not worth the time."

He laughed. "She calls every other day or so with a new scheme. She wants to know if she puts the car in her mother-in-law's name, can her mother-in-law then come and pick it up? Hell, I say, you don't have to go to that trouble. Just tell us where you live and we'll drive it over to you."

We drove off to our next appointment - with an informer who, presumably, had something interesting to say about a rash of bad cheques at west end banks. "You gotta have finks," said Angus. "You'd be nowhere without them. In fraud, they don't usually do it for money or a favor in return. Usually, they're just

mad at someone. In this case, it's the mother of some girl sent up for bad cheques. The mother says it's the boyfriend who led her girl into it. She wants to see that boyfriend get his. We're willing to listen."

But the fink wasn't in. On our way back to the office, Angus and Vass talked about the other frauds they've run up against. There's the gigolo who bilks well-to-do older women for loans against promises of marriage.

"And then there're the ones who romance the bank tellers," said Angus.

Some people haven't got the brains to survive in a city

"They stand outside a bank at about four o'clock, meet them and buy them dinner or something. Tellers don't make much money. So they're impressed by someone who throws money around. Before you know it, he's got her sneaking out the signatures from dormant accounts." Courts deal severely with such insider-abetted jobs - tellers, accountants, bank managers, lawyers dipping into clients' accounts, anyone in a position of trust who takes advantage of it gets the book thrown at him.

Then there are the boys who print up fake stocks and bonds, build up an account in a false name with a stockbroker - then, after a few months of small-time buying and selling, sock the broker with the counterfeits. There are the smooth hearing-aid salesmen and the phoney charity canvassers. There are those who deal in lost, stolen or fake credit cards. You think a bank's certified cheque is like pure gold? There are gentlemen in town who'll make up certified stamps on request. Others can print up precise copies of your company's pay cheque. There are phoney bank inspectors to chisel lonely old women living alone, and there are mortar mice who prey on the same old women with fake home repairs at astronomical prices.

"Those are the real scum," said Angus. "I mean, conning a bank, that takes some nerve. You go in and put yourself on the line. But conning some old woman! And they even pass their sucker lists back and forth so that the same old woman gets nailed

time and again. Boy, do I ever like it when I get one of those."

Back at the office, Sid was on the phone again. "Yes, Sid, I think I'm going to have to arrest you. I mean, I've put a lot of time in on this case, and someone's got to get it - even if it's only for public mischief. . . . Sid, right now I don't know who's telling the truth. All I know is someone's telling some pretty big fibs. . . . What's that? If he charges you with fraud, you're charging him with extortion? Well, have it your way, Sid, but if I may give you some good advice, get yourself a very, very good lawyer. . . . Yes, Sid, it has been a very nice day. Delightful weather. Well, stay in good health." He put down the phone.

A call to the Crown attorney's office to see what to do in the Bert vs. Sid Affair. The decision was to let them slug it out before the police step in. "Quite often, they'll settle it themselves," said Angus. "Whoever's wrong will quietly pay the money back and the other will forget about suing. Money works wondrous things. Then we can apply ourselves to more important issues."

Angus shook his head. He still hadn't a glimmer who was lying. "But then, with the good con men, it's hard to tell," he said. "The amateurs, they stutter, they talk too much, they smoke too much, sweat breaks out on their foreheads, they can't look you straight in the eye. They ask for a drink because their mouth is dry. You can see the veins in their neck throbbing with tension. After awhile, they start asking questions like 'I'm not guilty, but suppose I was, just suppose I was, for argument's sake, what would you guys do to me?' They almost hang themselves."

He smiled. "But the real pros, they'll look you square in the eye. They're sincere. Their handshake is firm. Their eyes are pure honesty. Whatever role they're playing, they are *living* that role. I think that they almost believe they are what they say they are. Look, I've had people order me off the premises after I've tried to tell them their best new-found friend has been conning them."

The only defence is to keep your wits about you - a difficult thing, admittedly, when it takes all you have to survive the normal pressures of a big city. For fraud lives mainly in big metropolitan areas where its practitioners can melt into quick anonymity.

"Too bad," said Angus, "but a lot of people haven't got the brains to survive in a city. They're easy marks. They have to be - look, even guys like Bert and Sid, smart boys both of them, they're in over their heads. At least, one of them is over his head. I wonder which one it is?"



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SEA MONSTER MASK (right) of the Tsimshian Indians is made of wood and was used at funerals. In Tsimshian mythology, such creatures fulfilled the role of transporting the deceased to the other world.

HAWK SPIRIT MASK (below), found at Alert Bay, B.C., is of Kwakiutl Indian origin. The half-human, half-animal visage has a hawk nose, and is decorated with human hair, feathers, cotton and twigs.



MEDICINE RATTLE is the work of a Tsimshian carver. A man-like figure with a killer whale head dominates one side, and a perforated dorsal fin folds back over the reverse side. The head of the rattle is joined to the handle with brass rivets.



MINIATURE MASK (actual size is less than 1½") was found in the Northwest Territories and represents the early phase of the Dorset Eskimo culture, around 700 BC. Carved from ivory, it is thought to have had some kind of magic or religious function.

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"It is the most truly Canadian culture"

be a tough breed, raved about it, and anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss declared that Northwest Indian art was on a par with that of ancient Greece and Egypt.

The pieces that will be on exhibition at the National Gallery are on loan from 11 Canadian museums.

It's difficult to put a price tag on a collection such as this (some exhibits range back to several centuries B.C.), but Dr. G. F. MacDonald, chief of the archaeology division of Canada's National Museum of Man in Ottawa, says it would be many millions.

Ironically, this impressive and valuable "Canadian" show — though it was organized with the help of many Canadians from the External Affairs Department on down — was the idea of Marcel Evrard, commissioner of exhibitions for the Paris museum, who conceived the plan and visited Canada five times to select the exhibits.

In fact, the Ottawa showing is a mere by-product of Evrard's big show. "It was an afterthought," says Dr. MacDonald, "that it would be shown in Canada."

Our own National Museum of Man, which has a good Indian-Eskimo collection, would be the logical place for the Canadian showing. But it doesn't have an adequate gallery for such an exhibition and so the National Gallery is being used.

After the brief Ottawa showing, which can't hope to attract anywhere near the number of visitors who attended the Paris exhibition, the works will be returned to the museums.

All this seems to suggest that the culture of Canada's first inhabitants is almost without honor in its own country.

Dr. William E. Taylor Jr., director of the Ottawa National Museum of Man, won't go that far, though he does agree that it's too bad an exhibition like this couldn't tour the entire country.

He explained that the original lending agreements with the museums were for the Paris show and were extended for the Canadian one. Soon the museums will want their pieces back for their own displays.

"And besides, many of the pieces are very old and delicate. It was a sacrifice of love on the part of the museums, since the risk of damage is significant."

Contemporary Canadians who decide, as a result of the show, to investigate the cultural and artistic legacy of the early Indians and Eskimos, will run up against a brick wall because there are very few reference works on the subject.

Says Dr. Taylor: "Our history books aren't worth a hoot in terms of appreciating the native cultures. This country *does* have an inheritance; and the Indian-Eskimo heritage is a rich and varied one."

Rev. Joseph Meeus, an Oblate missionary who has spent many years in the north, raises another point: present-day Indians and Eskimos themselves rarely get a chance to see the artistic works of their forefathers.

There is a small Eskimo Museum at Churchill, Man., he points out; but most historic and pre-historic specimens rest in southern museums. More Canadians, both old and new, should have a chance to see them.

"After all," he says, "it is the most truly Canadian culture."

This thought has not been lost on Dr. Taylor, who sometimes sounds like a missionary himself when he starts boosting Indian and Eskimo art.

"I'm planning to send an exhibition of Eskimo art to the Arctic," he says. "What d'you think of that?"



BLOOD INDIAN SHIRT came from southern Alberta. It is decorated with beaded strips on the arms and shoulders, and with scalplock pendants. Highly prized by wealthy Blood Indians, these shirts were worn during ceremonies and sometimes had certain songs associated with them. This one dates from the late 19th century.

CEREMONIAL HEADDRESS was worn by Kwakiutl dancers at Alert Bay, B.C. The main frontpiece is carved from one piece of alder wood, and the larger upper figure represents a hawk. It is in natural wood with black markings and has abalone shell inlay in the ears and eyes. The headband is decorated with sea lion whiskers.



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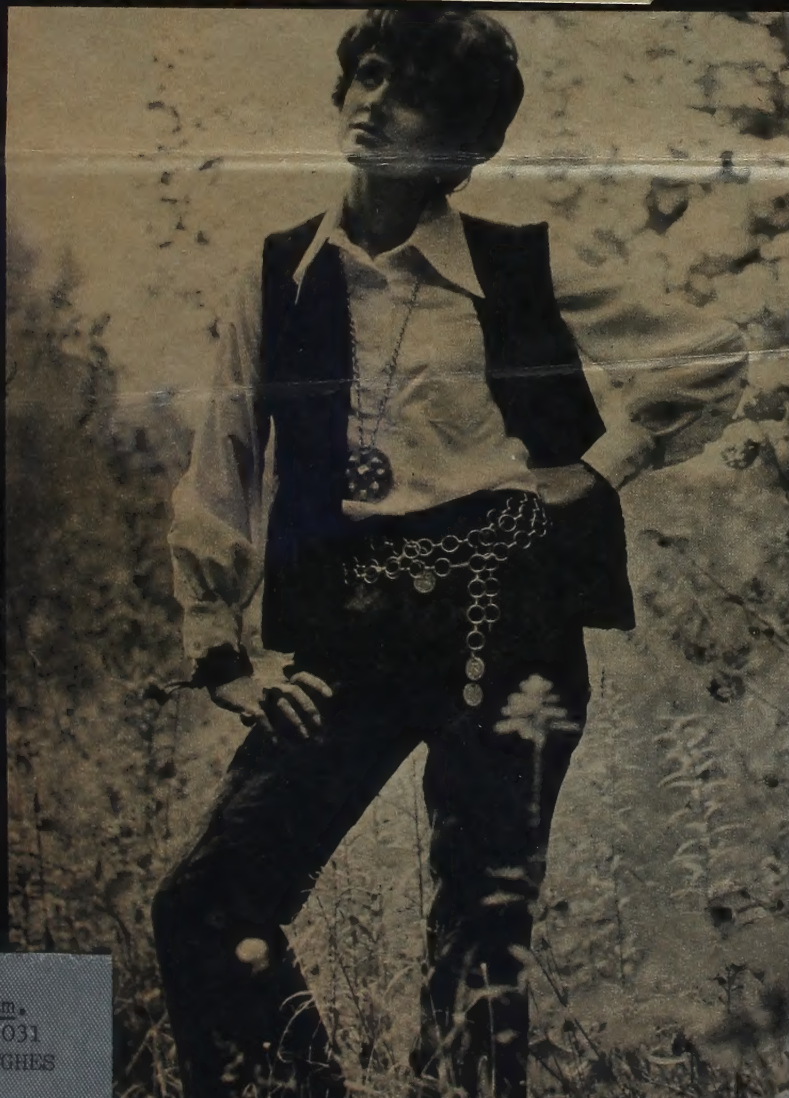
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FOR THE FELINE OF THE SPECIES

By Helen Meyer, Fashion Editor



Until recently most furs, real and synthetic, were too heavy and too hot for pant, skirt, suit and all other fashion that you had to wear indoors at least part of the time.

So, if you wanted to put a pelt on at home, you settled for something in a fabric printed to simulate leopard or tiger skin, or whatever species of wildlife appealed to you most.

Now, however, the fake fur people have produced a fur facsimile as light, flexible and glamorous as velvet, and the ready-to-wear industry is snapping it up like a pack of hungry wolves.

They're making it into vests, jumpsuits, pant fashions, skirt and dresses - all cool enough to wear right through next summer when they'll be even more popular than they are now.

"The animals are coming," said Women's Wear Daily when top designers gave the look the nod in July last year. And they are. Manufacturers are copying the idea in all kinds of fabrics from pure silk to vinyl.

Made into garments that are worn next to the body - such as the sleeveless jumpsuit shown here - these new lightweight furs are as alluring as bare skin.

They have a feline and slightly dangerous look about them. And that, more than anything else, is why young girls are going to grab them as fast as they hit the stores; why women will want them as well, and why their husbands aren't going to complain about paying the bills.



Photography: Jorgen Halling

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